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THE
EVE OF THE CRUCIFIXION.

BY

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THIS little Work is the expansion of four short Addresses delivered in Passion Week of this year (1858). Only the most striking points in the Sacred Narrative are touched upon—points needful for all times—specially, as regards some of them, for the present time. The language is designedly simple; and the reflections, it is hoped, are natural and obvious. A controversial tone has been avoided. May the Divine blessing accompany this humble attempt to draw attention to the wonderful amount of instruction and comfort, communicated in the inspired Account of our Lord's last Evening on earth before He suffered! To

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excite an interest in that Account may, through the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, lead to a spiritual reception of the instruction—to a joyful feeling of the comfort—to an everlasting union with Christ—and to such a practical exhibition here below of the fruits of that union, as may recommend our holy Religion to others; which is the greatest good we can do to our Church and Country in this or any day.

THE EVE OF THE CRUCIFIXION.

CHAPTER I.

THE EARLIER STAGE OF THE LAST SUPPER—
CHRIST WASHES THE DISCIPLES' FEET—
INSTRUCTION AND WARNING.

WHAT can be so deeply interesting to us, as anything which is closely connected with the *Crucifixion of Christ*?

To understand that great and mysterious event, we must not make the mistake of supposing, that its benefit is confined to the human race. It concerns the Universe. *It was the darkest, and yet the brightest*

event in the annals, not of Time only, *but* even, we may venture to say, of Eternity. We may infer this from what St. Paul tells us of "the manifold wisdom of God being made known through the Church" on earth "to the principalities and powers in heaven," (Eph. v., 19.) and from St. Peter's informing us, that "the angels desire to look into these things." (1 Peter i., 12.) The scene transacted on Calvary was, it appears, designed to be, not merely the means of our salvation from misery, and restoration to holiness and happiness, but also the object of unceasing admiration, and consequently the cause of confirmed stability, to those pure, celestial beings, who "have kept their first estate;" and who will never be weary of seeing in it, as in a glass, God's hatred against sin, in demanding such a sacrifice, and His compassion towards sinners, in providing it. They will feel unbounded delight in the contemplation, accompanied with corresponding awe. The Crucifixion was the *solution* of a problem, which none but God *could have solved*, namely, how it was

possible to reconcile divine pity and divine purity. It brought the attribute of Mercy to light ; but in so doing, it not less magnified the attribute of Justice. Thus Order—which has been well called “Heaven’s first law”—has been secured on a firmer and broader basis, through countless worlds of God’s free and intelligent creatures, by the increase of holy love of Him on the one hand for His mercy, and holy fear of Him on the other for His justice—both of which were so gloriously exhibited on our sin-stricken globe, when the Son of God expired on the Cross. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God !”

It must, however, be acknowledged,—and ought to be acknowledged with tears of gratitude,—that *our* benefit was the primary purpose of the Crucifixion. We find the inspired Scriptures engaged from first to last, either in preparing men for the coming of a suffering Saviour, or in describing His actual sufferings, or in setting before us the consequences, immediate and future, which *flow from them* ; and exhorting us, by all

that is to be hoped for, or to be dreaded, not to turn away our eyes, nor “make void the death of Christ.” For assuredly, to have heard of His death, and why it happened, and who He was, and what are its intended gracious effects, cannot leave a man just where he was, before he heard of all this. It must either serve, under God, to exalt him to a height of glory and goodness, far above Adam’s in his innocence; or it must plunge him into an abyss of woe and shame, unopened before Christ died. For bliss or for bale, it has changed the condition of the christianized portion of mankind. They are capable of committing a crime, which those who lived before Christ could not commit—that of “treading under foot the Son of God.” The knowledge of “His precious blood-shedding” must be to us either “the savour of life unto life,” or “the savour of death unto death.” If we are not the better for it, we must be the worse!

What need have we, then, to read the Scriptures diligently, with prayer for the *help of their Author and Giver*, and to

keep Christ's death continually before our inward sight, that such heavenly affections may be kindled in us, as may consume all earthly ones, and that we may reap the everlasting fruits of His bitter pains! And what occupation can be more delightful? If angels desire to look into these things, how much more should we!

It is proposed in the following pages to consider the narrative of the *Eve of the Crucifixion*, or as St. Paul expresses it, "*the Night in which Jesus was betrayed.*" It corresponds in interest with that of the Crucifixion itself. "Coming events," says a modern proverb, "cast their shadows before." Never were such deep shadows cast before by any event, as those which came over the human soul of Jesus that evening. He knew well what awaited Him. He knew the contest with the powers of darkness, into which He was descending. He knew the pangs He would have to endure on the Cross—pangs of a peculiar nature—such as no dying man ever yet endured—such, indeed, as an unpardoned

sinner must suffer for himself after death, but not even he in the degree in which our Blessed Lord suffered them, because on His head were heaped the sins of the whole world. He knew that He should be forsaken by His disciples in His sorest need. He anticipated all!—and we are aware what the agonizing force of anticipation is. The boldest warrior, we know, longs to rush into the battle, to escape from suspense. Jesus shared all our sinless weaknesses, and consequently this among the number. When we collate the separate accounts given by the four evangelists, and gather together all the particulars, we see the grandest and yet most touching spectacle that can be conceived. With the exception of that which was presented soon afterwards on the cross, there is nothing equal to it in Scripture. We see the various feelings which filled the Saviour's breast, both as regarded His Father, and as regarded His disciples, when the awful trial was at hand. He summoned all the faculties of His soul to meet and *endure it*. Before His Father, when He

prayed to Him apart, as we shall see, in Gethsemane, He gave way to emotions of heart-rending horror at the prospect of being treated *as sinful*, for our sakes. But before His disciples, He preserved the most perfect composure. Sensible that His time was short, He crowded into that short space all the acts and speeches, which might make it most valuable, both then to His disciples, and afterwards for ever to His Church. St. John's account admits us into the very holy of holies of our religion, on this occasion. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit, stand revealed, in their relation to us, with a distinctness unparalleled. Our Lord rises to the highest degree of majesty, whilst He never so clearly displayed His meekness and gentleness. Whilst He identified Himself more than ever with the Father, He more than ever drew near to us as a brother. In short, every remaining moment spent in the company of His disciples, was devoted to giving them instruction and warning, comfort and peace. These constituted His *legacy*. Thus He bestowed upon them and

us that "New Testament," which in "a little while" He sealed with His blood.

It is affecting to observe, that the Love, which throughout His ministry had burned in His bosom towards His disciples, seemed to burn most intensely, now that it was least deserved. He foresaw, and expressed His foresight on this very occasion, that none of them would stand by Him at last. Yet He loved them still! "Having loved His own, He loved them unto the end." They were "His sheep." He had "chosen them out of the world." Weak as they were, they loved Him, and had "left all to follow Him." And now that they were about to wander from Him, in the hour of dire temptation, and through foolish self-confidence, He pitied them the more, because they stood more in need of His pity. What must have become of them, had He not supplied them with tender assurances, which, when brought to mind afterwards, under the Spirit's guidance, might draw them back to "the Shepherd and Bishop *of their souls*"?

Who can do justice to such a subject? We cannot hope to do so. Nevertheless, we may approach "and see this great sight," since we are invited and the record has been handed down for our spiritual good. We may endeavour, in dependence on the Divine blessing, to enter somewhat more minutely than is usual, into the transactions and discourses belonging to the occasion which we have thus generally described.

Let us, then, transport ourselves, in imagination, to the City of Jerusalem—which was as yet standing in all its pride. Let us suppose that we see the shades of night beginning to fall around us. Jesus and the twelve Apostles are sitting—or rather reclining—round a supper-table,—probably in an obscure part of the City, removed from common observation. The room in which they are assembled is an upper one, indeed,—commodious and furnished for the purpose, with a table and seats,—but in all likelihood mean in the *character* of that furniture. For it was a

to walk through the streets till they
“meet a man bearing a pitcher
to whom they were to mention the
father’s need; and by whom they
were conducted to a house, the owner
would freely lend them a room.
They had done this; and now they were in the
house, which had thus gratuitously offered them
lodging. Clearly this circumstance of borrowing
lodging betrays our blessed Lord’s poverty!
He was the Creator of all things,
whom nothing was made that was
not by him. He had not a house, or a room which

* Theophylact has suggested, that the
pitcher purposely left by Our Lord unfixed before

call His own, while He was on this miserable earth. "Foxes have holes," He said, "and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." A destitute state was His deliberate choice. In comparison, indeed, with the glory which He voluntarily left to come down among us, the difference between one state here and another, must have been to Him as nothing—the highest and lowest must have appeared on a level in insignificance—just as the whole breadth of the earth's orbit is as nothing when seen from the fixed stars. But He chose earthly destitution with a view to our good—the only view He had, as regarded us, in all that He did. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," it enabled St. Paul to say, "that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." Though this was but the *least* part of His self-denial, yet it was the most visible, and might accordingly affect mankind. Also by *stooping to a low condition*, He would teach men

not to care about external circumstances, during their brief passage through this life. Moreover He would shew the poorest person on earth, that he is not below Christ's sympathy, derived from his own experience—that the Son of God looks upon him as a brother, if he unites himself to Him by a living faith—and that unavoidable poverty is no disgrace before God or men, since Jesus shared it.* The holiest, the warmest, the purest and most refined heart, may be found beating in a bosom covered with rags. On this occasion, we behold a borrowed and probably a very humbly—furnished room holding a company, more distinguished in God's sight, and more famous far in the world's history, than any body of princes and nobles that ever graced a royal banqueting-hall.

* The voluntary poverty of Jesus is a trait in His character not always sufficiently remarked. In Bethany, to which He usually retired at night from Jerusalem, He was the guest of Lazarus and his sisters. After death, Joseph of Arimathea lent Him a grave. As a man, Jesus had nothing of *His own here, except His sinless and sympathising humanity.*

Let us now turn to this distinguished company who sat round Jesus at the table.

Their real distinction, as His followers, did not shew itself at the moment. It had been conferred, when He chose them to be Apostles;—and it shewed itself brightly after His Resurrection;—but at present it was under an eclipse through their personal weakness. The Paschal Supper, which they were met to eat, was practically divided by the Jews into two stages—the lamb being reserved for the second stage. At the commencement* of the first—or perhaps a little previously—a strife, it appears, privately arose, which of them should be greatest in their Master's coming Kingdom (Luke xxii. 24.) Never was a strife respecting earthly greatness so unseasonable, as was that of the disciples at such a time.

* Our authorized version says, "supper being ended"—which is an unfortunate translation. The Greek words answer equally well to the translation—"supper being arrived." And this meaning is clearly the true one in the present case, from all that follows. The most learned commentators are fully *agreed on this point.*

They were unconscious how soon they would all shew their *littleness* by the conduct towards their common Lord. They were blind to the nature of the Kingdom He was about to establish. Yet they had enjoyed ample opportunities of learning what it was. Jesus had told them again and again, that their only honour and distinction in this world would be to suffer for Him. But none are so blind as those who have no wish to have their eyes opened. Therefore they still remained ignorant of the great fact, that our Lord's Kingdom was "not of this world." He had reproved a similar strife among them at an earlier period of His ministry—but in vain. With unwearied patience He reproves it once more. He does this by a very striking symbolical action. "He riseth from supper, we are told, "and laid aside His garment and took a towel and girded Himself; after that, He poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded." "So after He had wash

their feet, and had taken His garments, and was set down again, He said unto them, Know ye what I have done unto you? Ye call Me Master, and Lord; and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet; for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord, neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him." What an inimitable parable is here!—a parable not spoken, but acted. He did not mean, as some have taken it, that on some special and solemn occasion, once a year, the disciples were literally to wash one another's feet; no, He has told us that His words were spirit and life; and we ought to apprehend them with spirit and life. He meant the disciples to infer, that their mission in this world would be a very different thing from that which they expected. It would be a mission of usefulness and charity—not of personal aggrandise-

ment; and he who cared least what ~~we~~ might think of him in himself, would be the greatest in his Heavenly Master's sight. In short, He inculcated Humility. And He inculcated it by His own example. I had tried reasoning in vain on former occasions; what remained, but to set an example? If *He* could stoop to the lowly act of service, who henceforth could think himself degraded by so stooping? Had He degraded Him to do what He had done? Had He forgotten His inherent glory? St. John has guarded against our supposing this for a moment, by finely commencing his history of the transaction with the words: "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went (or, was going) "to God—riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments, and took a towel, and girded Himself." What He did, was but a practical illustration of His own words, "Learn of Me, for I am meeble and lowly in heart"! Christianity began in His "*humbling Himself,*" and layin

aside "the form of God," to "take upon Him the form of a servant" (Phil. ii.) ;— and the Father's estimate of the Son's self-abasement is declared by the Apostle : "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus" (His human name) "every knee should bow"! In accordance with its beginning in Christ's humiliation, and leading to His exaltation, Christianity when individualized in the heart of a man begins by humbling him, that it may end in exalting him. In ourselves, what are we? What do we merit, but punishment for our sins? And in our state of adoption through Christ, "what have we that we have not received?" If every spiritual feeling, every renewed faculty, every quickened power in us, all life, all faith, all hope, all gentleness and goodness, all love of God and of each other, are the gifts and fruits of free grace—surely "boasting is excluded." Pride is a remnant of "*the old man.*" On a previous occasion, when

our Lord had the pain and distress being compelled to reprove the disciples their worldly ambition (and it must have been still more painful to Him now to the necessity of repeating the reproof), had adopted a beautiful parabolic mode effecting His purpose: "He took a child and set him in the midst," as the type of His most fitting representatives—saying: "Whosoever shall receive on such little child in My name, receiveth Me." We should have imagined, that the disciples could never have forgotten this; and that their only strife would have been, which of them could most exhibit the child-like character. But not so! If, however, we are grieved to see their slowness to understand the nature of Christ's kingdom, and to catch His image, we are privileged to see His wonderful forbearance and long-suffering. And we are forced to meditate on the truth of the Religion which He has founded. Humility has never been taught by any other religion. Yet *the world can see its heavenly beauty, now*

that it has been taught by Christ. Such a religion could have but one origin. Satan would have taught pride. The world would have taught pride. Men's hearts, corrupted by the fall, would have taught pride. The religion of the False Prophet of Arabia, we know, teaches pride. Every false religion does. Whence, then, could the Gospel have emanated, but from God? It did not emanate from the writers themselves of the Gospel—for they are the faithful chroniclers of their own failings—and nothing is more prominent than the divine superiority by which in their narratives our Lord stands distinguished from the best amongst them.

During the striking transaction we have been contemplating, there occurred a not less striking episode. This was a conversation, by which it was interrupted, between our Lord and Peter. We cannot doubt that our Lord looked forward to it as what would arise from His act of washing the feet. Not only did that act beautifully *teach* humility, but an opportunity was

his feet washed, he drew to
he cried, "dost Thou wash
seems to have thought it an
priety on the part of our Lord
for an explanation. If so,
vouchsafe an immediate explanation
I do," He replied, "thou knowest
but thou shalt know hereafter
"hereafter" only means
What a comfort has this re-
tended sense, been in after a
disciples, when their Master's
them have appeared strange
ble! But to Peter, at the time

Master condescend to do him such an honour. But, however good his feeling might be, it was mingled with self-will. His speech contained also an assumption of a superior sensitiveness to what concerned our Lord's honour, as if he had said, "Whatever *others* do, I will not permit Thee to wash my feet." We would not do injustice to the warm-hearted disciple—but we know that forwardness characterized him, till he was fully "converted," after terrible experience of his weakness. Jesus bore with his weakness—but put the matter in such a light, as speedily brought the controversy to a close. "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in Me!" Never did words create a greater revulsion in a man than these did in Peter. He could not endure the thought of being separated from Jesus. It was worse than death to him. From one extreme, he passed into the opposite one. "Lord!" he now cried, "not my feet only, but also my hands and my head"—as if it could have secured *him a larger part in Jesus to have these*

washed also. In the reply of our Lord we see not merely an implied check on the impulsive disciple, who again erred from want of implicit submission; but we receive an inward symbolical meaning in the language: "He that is washed, need not, save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit. And ye are clean,—but not all!" The outward meaning doubtless was, that whosoever had washed his feet and his head before sitting down to supper—did not stand in any need of having *these* washed; but though he had washed his feet, they required washing again, because they were continually being soiled. But the deeper meaning respected the soul. As He said, "Ye are clean—but not all." The Evangelist, writing at a distant time, and having these words "brought to his remembrance" by the Comforter, supplies the key to it, which the disciples at the time did not possess: "For He who should betray Him; therefore, *He, ye are not all clean.*" This evi-

refers to internal and spiritual cleanliness. Judas was the one, whose hands and head, in a figurative sense, needed washing,—as well as his feet. With this key to the spiritual signification, how beautifully instructive is the turn which the Great Teacher gave to the conversation with Peter! It amounts to this: Even after a man has become a sincere follower of Christ, not a hypocrite like Judas,—after he has experienced a complete change—after he has been washed and cleansed in “the fountain open for sin and uncleanness” on Calvary, which is ever flowing, and has received the Holy Ghost, whose strengthening and refreshing operation in the soul is spoken of as “living water”—(John vii. 38, 39)—after he has been justified and sanctified, and “is a new creature in Christ Jesus”—he will yet be liable to daily and hourly contamination in the world; and through the infection of nature which still remains in him, his feet, as it were, will need fresh washing—he must have daily and hourly recourse to the Saviour’s blood

to cleanse him from his daily and hourly soiling. What a precious practical truth was here unfolded! At a later period in the evening, our Lord reverted to the subject, and made a most valuable addition to the instruction already given, by specifying the instrument, which in the hands of the Spirit, cleanses us as regards the greater cleansing. It is *the Word*. "Now ye are clean," He said, "through the Word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in Me, and I in you." That blessed Word has been committed to writing, for men in all generations. It is to make us "clean," and it is to enable us to "abide in Christ." To this end, we must read it for ourselves. The Holy Spirit who assisted the writers, will assist the readers. "Faith," says St. Paul, "cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." The Spirit will give no new light, but He will remove the film of unbelief which the flesh brings over the eyes. The same Apostle speaks of the Word, as "quick" (having life) and "powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword." In

another place, he calls it, "the sword of the Spirit"—which may well be sharper than any other sword—to slay both our sins and our enemies. And not to be behind St. Paul on this cardinal point,—the use and value of the Word of God, with the help of the Spirit,—St. Peter writes to his Christian brethren: "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the Truth through the Spirit; Being born, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever; And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached to you." Having this blessed Book in our hands, we keep company with Jesus, as the disciples did,—with the advantage of understanding fully that which they but partially understood at the time. By the *faith* it produces, we see Him in all the acts which have been recorded. By faith, we are present at all His miracles. By faith, we hear from His lips all His parables and discourses, with the brief sayings which fell like pearls of great price from His mouth on every passing occur-

united to Jesus—we not only
feet, like Mary, but we lean on
like John. How can we attain
without constantly studying the
If we neglect them, we stand
Jesus. If we read them but
we shall not grow acquainted
To know Him, we must have
verse. Only by the numerous
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tercourse, can such a character
apprehended and felt. Only
gazing on every feature in
picture of Him, presented in Ho
can we catch and reflect H
image. To miss the smaller

live with Jesus, and continually look upon Him, we shall grow like Him—and not else. May He look down upon us, and see us continually and honestly studying His character! May He have the satisfaction of saying of us, as He did of His disciples,—Judas excepted,—“Now ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you!”

Alas! that “reprobate”—that solitary *exception*—was a misery to Jesus. That He should have borne it for our sakes shews the extent of His love;—and is part of the example He has set us—that of sacrificing our own comfort for the benefit of our brethren. Judas was a perpetual affront to Him. For the space of more than three years, he had heard His word without a wish to be cleansed by it. The mere entrance of the Word into the ears and the mind, it is practically shewn by this case, is not enough. That it may enter the heart, there must be the agency of a Power which can expel evil spirits from it. Judas *had experienced* no change. He had “com-

sinner in the most affectionate manner—
which healed the sick—which calmed the
waves—which commanded the winds to
bier at Nain, and the grave to give up the
dead. Yet all in vain, an alarming instance
of the insufficiency of the means of grace,
if there be no heart to have that grace,
and if the life be inconsistent with its
source. Jesus had not left the disciples
that there was *one* among them who was
not by His teaching. He had intimated
on former occasions which He stated on
this, that they were not all clean.” Can
we conceive of a more solemn warning
with which He announced such

must not forget, if we would appreciate our obligations to our Blessed Lord, that though He could not sin as we do, because He alone of all the descendants of Adam had an immaculate conception, yet He could feel as we do—and far more keenly. Every failing of His disciples was a stab to Him. What, then, must have been the amount of His suffering, from the daily contemplation of the sin of Judas! We have seen one reason for His bearing it—that we may not trust to the mere enjoyment of the means of grace, without self-examination, and prayer for the Holy Spirit. Would we see more reasons? Doubtless, it was desirable for the confirmation of our faith. We learn from this, that there was an unfriendly witness, watching from the first everything that Jesus did, in private as well as public. Now even this man, when at last his conscience awoke, was constrained to confess, that, in betraying his Master, he had “betrayed the innocent blood.” Much as he was interested in finding the least circumstance that could justify or excuse his

deed, his memory furnished nothing. In this arrangement, then, of things, we perceive the wisdom, as well as kindness, of our self-denying Redeemer. He "pleased not Himself," but endured a cause of incessant indignation and grief, that His character might be exposed to the severest test—that of an enemy's constant inspection,—and might at last be gloriously established by that enemy's reluctant acknowledgment. Our Lord's moral purity is thus placed beyond the reach of suspicion. How much must this have aided in the early spread of His Religion! Even now, how much it confirms our faith, and adds to our comfort, to feel, that there is not a spot which malevolence itself can fix on our Lord's character. A spy, with all the advantages of a brother, could not detect a single stain. Thus He is proved to be the promised "Lamb without blemish and without spot."*

* Modern Infidels have, with scarcely an exception, acknowledged our Lord's perfect virtue. Rousseau stands favorably contrasted with Voltaire *in this respect.*

There might be yet another reason, why it pleased our Lord to admit Judas to the outward privileges of an apostle. He might design to hold up to the view of Christians in the most glaring light the extraordinary and terrible power of Covetousness. The almost incredible crime of Judas, in the face, not merely of Christ's moral goodness and kindness, but also of the exhibition of His divine power by His many miracles, shews us, that covetousness is the sin which will go furthest in its daring defiance of reason and religion. In fact, it is "idolatry" (Eph. v., 5.) Judas worshipped the money in the bag, in the presence of "God manifest in the flesh." No religious privileges can avail a covetous man. His heart is pre-occupied. He can carry his idol with him into every place, and gratify himself by worshipping it at every hour. No matter how mean the idol!—it is his God—it has his affections—it shuts out worthier objects—he must bow down to it. What a warning is *this to the Church of Christ—a warning*

... of money, which, as
says, "is the root of all evil."
tremble, if it has taken the lead
us, and begun to deprive us of t
that to give to those who need
much a duty as a delight! The
chill may be the sign of a disease
will kill our souls. The great
"Paradise Lost" has, with a daring
but with poetical truth, strikingly
Mammon, even before his fall from
as unable to keep his eyes from
on the golden pavement.* Our on
is to get our breast filled with a be
We must "have our treasure in
if our hearts are to be there. V

experience (and God will give us to experience it, if we ask him) what has been well expressed, "the expulsive power of a new affection."

We have now seen how much Instruction and Warning was connected with what our Lord did and said during the earlier stage of the feast. One only point we may yet notice. Another grief assailed Him. Another mournful prediction was drawn from His lips. It seems to have been determined in the everlasting counsels of God, that He should have no human consolation that awful night. Angels indeed waited anxiously to strengthen Him, in the crisis of His succeeding contest with Satan, or rather in the exhaustion which attended His victory—but men, the beings for whom He came to contend and suffer, even the best and choicest of men, His own beloved and loving disciples, did nothing to cheer Him. On the contrary, they added to His pain. Peter it was who again grieved Him—though he had no idea of so doing, but meant to please *Him with the assurance of his fidelity.*

Jesus was speaking of His approachⁱⁿ trials and death. When he spoke in similar manner on a former occasion, Peter had uttered words moresuitable to a tempter than to a follower. He played the part of a modern rationalist. "Be it far from Thee, Lord !—this shall not be unto Thee." It offended his reason, that his Master's words should bear their plain meaning. On that occasion our Lord severely rebuked his scepticism. On the present, he did not repeat his former error. He took our Lord's words in their plain and natural meaning ; but he fell into another error—that of self-confidence. His attachment to Jesus was great and ardent, but his knowledge of the weakness of human nature was small. When, therefore, our Lord told them : "Little children, yet a little while I am with you ; Ye shall seek Me, and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come, so now I say unto you ;"—"Simon Peter said unto Him, Lord, whither goest Thou ? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst *not follow Me* now, but thou shalt follow

Me afterwards. Peter said unto Him, Why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake." There was nothing wrong in this declaration, had it been uttered in a spirit of dependence on God for strength. It is right for a faithful soldier of Jesus Christ to say, that he will follow his Leader to the death—provided he means, that he will do this God helping him! But our Lord's immediate comment on Peter's declaration, shews that it was uttered in no such spirit. Peter depended upon himself. He had spoken;—and now he was expecting probably to hear the same commendation which once greeted his delighted ears, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona!" Instead of which, that dreadful prediction—the last he could have looked for—came from Jesus: "Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied Me thrice!" The rapidly approaching dawn, to which our Lord alludes as the

cock-crowing,* would fearfully dispel Peter's illusion. Nothing but the arrival of that time and the actual event would! The self-deluded disciple will not believe the prediction;—to the increased grief of his Master, he replies:—"Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee."

Have we not witnessed enough for the present, at the table where our Lord and His disciples are sitting? We must wait for the cock-crowing to see the fulfilment of His sad prediction concerning Peter. Meanwhile, we have seen sufficient to admit us into the sorrowful feelings which filled His bosom. But we may observe one thing more. It was not Peter alone who displayed such vain self-confidence. The other disciples did the same—though not to so great an extent. As if His cup of grief was not already full, they added one drop more.

* As the sound of an actual cock-crowing was certainly heard *before* Peter's third denial, our Lord's words here meant, not the actual sound, but the full time called "the cock-crowing." Not unfrequently a cock would crow before the time—as we see to have *been the case on this occasion.*

For when Peter repeated his asseveration that he would die with Jesus, it is said, "Likewise also said all the disciples." They all trusted in themselves that they were strong—consequently they all fell in the hour of trial. Christ knew that they would forsake Him. But He forgave them. He interceded with the Father for them—as He did also for Peter. "Simon, Simon," He said to him, "Satan hath desired to have you," (that is, all of you) "that he might sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." This did not mean that He excluded the other disciples from His prayer, but that He prayed especially for Peter, because his fall would be greater than theirs; his deserting his Master would be aggravated by his denying Him. Accordingly Jesus speaks of Peter's "conversion," as an event which would "strengthen his brethren," by being to them an assurance, that if Peter found forgiveness and restoration, much more would they!

Grief and love contended which should

cerning His grief; but it tells of triumphant Love. "Having loved it says, "He loved them unto the

The *instruction and warning* marked the early stage of the sup now give way to comfort and peace will mark the second stage. The rays of the setting sun are generally the softest and mildest.

"I WILL PRAY THE FATHER, AND HE SHALL GIVE
COMFORTER, THAT HE MAY ABIDE WITH YOU
(John xiv., 16.)

CHAPTER II.

THE LATER STAGE OF THE SUPPER.—THE
EUCCHARIST.—THE DISCOURSE.—COMFORT AND
PEACE.

THE later and more solemn part of the supper is now arrived. Henceforth Jesus, during the short remainder of His life on earth, appears before us in the character, not so much of the Lord and Master, as of the Friend and Brother. He Himself has authorized us to apply to Him these tender epithets. By His own mouth, He said to His disciples: "I have called you friends." By His apostle's, He tells us that He was "not ashamed to call them brethren." And *the same* Apostle has given us that ines-

timable declaration—a balm in every trouble:—"We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." His *sympathy* draws us to Him, beyond anything else.

Accordingly, Jesus now gave His perplexed and alarmed disciples that precious portion of His divine legacy, which consisted principally of Comfort and Peace.

This He did in two ways:—by an act first, and then by a discourse.

The act was the solemn one of ordaining the Sacrament of the "Lord's Supper"—deriving its name from the supper before us.

That supper, we must remember, was the Jewish Feast of the Passover.* It was a feast upon a sacrifice. A lamb, the blood of which had previously been shed by a priest, and

* There are disputes whether our Lord kept the Passover at the very same time when the Priests and Pharisees did, and on like points—but these are here *avoided*.

sprinkled on the altar in the temple, lay on the table, prepared for eating. The feast was the ordained memorial of the miraculous deliverance of the ancestors of the Jews, when the Destroying Angel who slew the first-born of the Egyptians, passed over the houses of the Israelites, which were sprinkled with a lamb's blood. That deliverance had speedily been followed by the departure from Egypt, and the glorious passage through the Red Sea. The Feast of the Passover was not only a joyful commemoration, but also a standing evidence of the matter of fact commemorated. For it was instituted at the very time ; and it bore the reason of its institution on its face. Our Blessed Lord took occasion to establish a similar Christian feast, in memory of His approaching death ; and of our deliverance thereby from eternal death, provided our hearts and consciences are sprinkled with His blood. “ For He is the very Paschal Lamb, which was offered for us, and hath taken away the sin of the world, who by *His death has destroyed death, and by His*

rising to life again hath restored to us everlasting life." The feasts and sacrifices of the Jews, were "ready to vanish away. They had served their purpose. They were like the bright shadows of the morning which borrow their tints from the rising sun, but disappear when he has risen. Doubtless, many a pious Jew in every preceding age, had seen in the sacrifice of unoffending animals the mysterious truth—on which depends the salvation of mankind and the comfort of every trembling conscience—that God in due time would lay on some fit and innocent substitute "the iniquities of us all." Without this blessed truth, the whole sacrificial system is unintelligible. Without it, the voices of all the prophets—particularly Isaiah—are unintelligible. That Substitute was come at last. He was come of His own accord. He could say: "I lay down My life for Myself." And He was not only a voluntary victim, but also one free from all spot or sin. "He was made sin for us, who knew *no sin*, that we might be made the right

ousness of God in Him.”* Moreover, He was God incarnate—therefore His blood had an infinite efficacy—He was the “propitiation for the sins of the whole world.” In every way, then, He was the fit and innocent Substitute, who consented to be “wounded for our sins, and bruised for our iniquities, that the chastisement of our peace might be upon Him, and by His stripes we might be healed.” From all eternity it was said: “Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not—which were offered by the law—then said I, Lo, I come!”—and at length, in the fulness of time, He had appeared to perform this undertaking—had united Himself

* In order that He might lay down His life of Himself, it was necessary that He should be born free from all sinful desires—the infection of our nature from Original Sin—the penalty of which, is the first Death. To this effect speaks Hooker: “The sentence of death and condemnation, which only taketh hold upon sinful flesh, could in no way possibly extend to Him. This made His death voluntary.” Eccl. Pol., b. 5. c. 56. In these few words, the error that Christ was born not merely in the likeness of sinful flesh, but with sinful propensities, is effectually *over-thrown*.

to our flesh—had borne it more than thirty weary years, and was at this moment about to submit it to be torn and mangled, and His human soul to be violently rent from it by death—"the just for the unjust," to bring us to life. *Could such a sacrifice be left uncommemorated?* The Christian feast—superseding the Jewish—is the joyful commemoration of it—not annual, but continual, and which shall last whilst the world lasts. Like the Jewish, it is also a standing evidence of the matter of fact commemorated. For it was instituted on the occasion—and has no meaning but what it derives from the Crucifixion. By it, the Apostle says, "we do shew the Lord's death, till He come." There is no fresh sacrifice attending our feast. The Lamb is not on our table,—but on the Throne of God. The sacrificial part could be performed by no hands but His, who stands alone in His Priesthood. The sacrifice had not yet been actually made, at the first administration. Our part, then, is to remember the great event which took place in a few hours. When

do this in a right spirit—an humble, thankful, believing, and loving spirit—a spirit given us from above, for asking—the Lord Jesus Himself will be with us. He will be really present,—though His real risen body is in heaven—and will be there, till “He shall come in like manner as He was seen to go into heaven.”* He will regard us as His true disciples, and will give us the “innumerable benefits which by His precious bloodshedding He hath obtained to us.” For whenever we hear the summons which the Church of Christ sounds forth: “Christ, our Passover, is slain for us, let us keep the feast,” and respond to it with our whole heart, by assembling at His table, “then we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink His blood;—then we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us;—we are one with Christ, and Christ with us.” And not only are we

* Hooker says: “Nothing of Christ which is limited, nothing created, neither the soul nor the body of Christ, and consequently, not Christ *as man*, or Christ according to His human nature, can possibly be *everywhere* present.”—Eccl. Pol., b. 5. c. 55.

THE EVE OF

and more closely to Him by faith, which is its most delightful as well as essential exercise in this spiritual feast, also to our true brethren in Christ. It is what St. Paul beautifully calls it, our communion." As our Church says: "God assure us thereby, that we are very members incorporate in the Mystical Body of His Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people."

That a touching *brevity* marked the inauguration of this most solemn rite of our communion!

Jesus simply took bread, and called it His 'body broken.' With His own hands He gave the wine, saying, "This is My

ber Him: "Do this in remembrance of Me!" And this is the whole history of the transaction contained in the Gospels!—to which St. Paul in his account adds nothing. Yet what unspeakable, unimaginable pains and tortures, were thus briefly and calmly alluded to by the gracious sufferer! At what a cost was He about to be "our Passover!" What a passage was He preparing for Himself through the Red Sea of His dreadful and shameful death! Not the glorious spectacle of a triumphant leader like Moses, carrying through the retiring waves a joyful people, who were escaping from a bondage grievous to them, and thankfully leaving their enemies to perish on the shore,—but that of a solitary, fainting, silent individual, going down sadly into the deep waters, red with His own blood—His enemies rejoicing and taunting Him, and to all appearance victorious. And all this shame and suffering to be borne for the race to which those enemies belonged!—that a door of salvation might be opened to *them*—that eternal justice might be kept

pure and unsullied, while eternal mercy might be enabled to cry, "Deliver them from the pit, for I have found a ransom." Yet with the full and immediate prospect of what He was about to bear, Jesus utters not one word of reproach or complaint. He announces in fewest words the benefit intended. What more touching can be conceived?

At the same time, what a *sublime consciousness* of the dignity of His person, and of the sure accomplishment of His design, shone forth, under circumstances to the eye of sense utterly inconsistent with both!

On the eve of the Crucifixion—the death of direst ignominy—He institutes an everlasting commemoration, whereby *His Cross* would be held up as the object in which all nations should most glory. On the point of dying, He acts as the Conqueror of Death—as having the keys of the grave—as purposing to come forth from that loathsome prison-house, without "seeing corruption"—as preparing the way for the glad tidings of His Resurrection to travel into all lands—as *contemplating* the sure establishment of

is Kingdom on the ruin of Satan's. When we know that His subsequent Resurrection and Ascension proved Him to be neither a receiver nor an enthusiast, who does not feel that this majestic confidence, under such outward circumstances, shews us, even more distinctly than the next day's earthquake shewed the Roman centurion, that truly this was the Son of God ! ”

Adorable Saviour ! let us worship Thee ! let us love Thee ! Let us make Thee our only Lord—our only hope—our only righteousness ! Let us follow Thee faithfully ! Let us count it all joy to suffer for Thee—all honour to “ bear Thy reproach ! ” Let us copy by meekness and gentleness, Thy kindness and self-devotion. Hast Thou founded a memorial of Thy dying love—a spiritual feast—a communion—to knit our hearts to Thee, and to one another ? And shall we ever wilfully absent ourselves from it ? Is it possible that we can be guilty of such ingratitude ? Alas ! we know that it is possible. We are ashamed and blush to lift up our faces to Thee, at the recollection

that we have been guilty of it. Forgive our past sin and folly—blot it out by Thy blood—and may the frequent contemplation of Thy divine goodness in the Sacred History prevent us henceforth, under the influence of Thy Spirit, from missing single opportunity of appearing at Thy holy table. Blessed Jesus! if Thou art never weary of remembering us, shall we ever be weary of remembering Thee? The glories of heaven cannot divert Thy thoughts from us, shall the cares and pleasures of earth divert ours from Thee?

After having instituted this Commemoration of His approaching sacrifice on the cross—which was essentially full of comfort because, though it spoke of His death, spoke also of that triumph over death which would make His sufferings worthy to be “remembered” through all generations)—our Lord proceeded to deliver the Discourse, which is contained in the 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th chapters of St. John Gospel. No words can express its value. The delightful privilege of handing it down

to us was reserved for "the disciple whom Jesus loved,"—because it is a discourse which breathes nothing but love. It was manifestly spoken for the purpose of imparting comfort and peace to the sad disciples—and not to them alone, but to all who should become His disciples, and need the same comfort and peace, in after times. It bears internal evidence of its divine origin. It admits us into the innermost sanctuary of Revelation.

The great doctrines it reveals, in a far clearer manner than in the other Gospels, are, the relation of the Father and the Son both to each other and to us, and the personality and precise office of the Holy Ghost.

It would be impossible to examine the whole discourse. Volumes would not do it justice. But that we may feel what a debt of gratitude we owe for the communications of that wonderful Evening, let us first analyze the part given us in the 14th chapter—the part which belongs to the supper-table—and afterwards briefly glance at the remainder.

The disciples are plainly informed, that their beloved Master is about to leave them. But they will not be orphans (*ὀρφανοί*). He "will not leave them comfortless." They will not be fatherless. They will lose His bodily presence—but they will not lose Him. They will know Him better and love Him more. He will return to them in the spirit. His departure will be the precursor of a closer, more exalted, and happier union.

The fatherly character of God,—known only through knowing the Son;—and the speedy gift of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter,—in an abundance and manner hitherto not granted;—form the leading truths communicated in the discourse.

He first opens heaven to their eyes. "In my Father's house are many mansions." Thither, He says, He is going. And with what intent? How could this benefit them? "I go to prepare a place for you!" Those mansions were to be theirs. He could admit them by right of *His Sonship*. The time would come, when

He would "receive them to Himself," that where He was about to be, "there they might be also." They would have the privilege of being sons, by being "one with Him."

Now let us for a moment reflect, what a transporting vision this must have been to the disciples—so soon as they were able to understand it and call it to mind. Here, in the deepest earthly darkness, a light is poured into their hearts. Just when they are about to be houseless and friendless in the world, and to have their very "name cast out as evil," they are told of a *new home*! a home far better than any they might have dreamt of, in their ignorance, on earth—"a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens"—a place of rest, where they would again be with their Lord, never to lose sight of Him any more, but to "see Him as He is",—not as He had been seen for a season in this world, but in His Glory.

And by what way could they attain to that new abode? By what ladder—such

as the angels', which Jacob saw—could they climb to heaven? *By Him!* He would not only prepare the place, but be the way. This delightful truth was drawn forth by Thomas—the doubting disciple—whose doubts have been so useful in confirming our faith—like the dark shades in a picture, which set off the bright parts. "Lord," he cried, "we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?" Jesus answered: "*I am the way*, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." What an animating declaration!—even if they could not as yet fully appreciate it. The way to heaven might have been open, but so hard to tread as to make their hearts faint. But not so, when they heard that He Himself was the way! This enunciation was sufficient for the present. Afterwards, when His work was completed by His death, resurrection, and ascension, and the descent of the Holy Ghost, they knew its entire meaning and value—and they have enabled *us to know the same*. We see in those

words, "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me," a revelation of the very first importance. It is that which Christianity alone has made known to mankind. "The glory of God," as the Apostle has said, "is revealed in the face of Jesus Christ." *Only in Jesus is God seen as a Father!** A Father, not to deserving creatures, but to unworthy sinners! Where can we learn that God is such a Father, but in the Gospel? Reason can perceive that there is a God. But this is an abstract view of Him, which has no power over the heart. Philosophy can "feel after Him," and discover that He is the Father of the Universe, and that "we are His offspring" as the work of His hands, and that virtue is pleasing to Him as a moral Governor; but how or when could it conceive of Him as the reconciled Father of sinful men? How

* A Father, not like one of us, who can at once, and without demanding expiation, forgive the sins of our children, because we ourselves are sinful; but a Father who before He could forgive us had to consult and satisfy the demands of Eternal Justice.

could it imagine "the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the Love of Christ"—without knowing which, the conception of a pure and holy God, retaining all His purity and all His holiness, and yet receiving us not only as pardoned rebels but as restored children, is impossible? All false religions—or depravations of the true one—suppose that we must bring something of our own in our hands to propitiate God. This utterly prevents comfort from entering the conscience, for who shall say, whether what we bring will be enough? But Christianity says: "No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me!" These words are written on Heaven's portals. Our passport is Christ. He is the way, and He has the keys. We must walk in Him, and we are safe, for time and for eternity. Out of Him, we are lost. Free mercy has done all for us—has provided us with justification and sanctification—with Christ's blood and the Spirit's power. "God is just, and the justifier of Him that believeth in *Jesus*." *Faith to lay hold of Christ—to*

welcome His benefits—to hide ourselves in Him—to obey the motions, and bring forth the fruits, of the Spirit—is all that is demanded of us. He brings us to the Father. The Father “accepts us in the Beloved.” In the Old Testament this was but faintly shadowed forth. Judaism did indeed raise the cry to heaven, “Doubtless Thou art our Father!”—but it could not clearly shew the way to Him. It was the preparation for Christianity—it was the spring-time and had the seed and the bud. But it was a cold and bitter spring—suited to a stiff-necked and hard-hearted people. The light did but struggle and penetrate through the clouds here and there. What were its Ceremonies but a yoke to the spiritual Jew, “which neither he nor his fathers could bear;” and a snare to the unspiritual Jew, which drew forth his natural self-righteousness? Yet they were needful to separate the people from the nations around them—they were “a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ.” And what were its animal sacrifices, but an apparently cruel spectacle,

they not already seen enough to awaken their minds? He appeals to His *words*, spoken to them both on former occasions and then, such as none other man ever spoke: "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of Myself!" He appeals also to His *works*, such as none other man ever did: "The Father, that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works!" These works, done expressly in many instances as testimonies, proved the truth of what He said to the cavilling Jews: "I and My Father are one!" And if the disciples were yet slow to perceive in Him the manifestation "of Him that sent Him," He bids them wait but a little time, and they, as His brethren, and made sons of God by Him, would be endowed with power from on high, to do equal and even "greater works," in attestation of the same blessed truth. They would then know the real character of their mission. They would themselves see the Father in the Son, and make Him known to others. Their faith, if weak at present, *would soon be established. At present*

they were more capable of loving, than of comprehending. They had a real affection for their Master—as Peter’s passionate expression after his fall shews: “Thou knowest that I love Thee!” But hitherto they had been contentedly lingering in the infancy, as it were, of Christianity. They had used no efforts to escape out of the leading-strings of Judaism. They could not as yet open their eyes to the fact, that God was the *Father of all mankind*—not of the Jew only, but also of the Gentile—and had “sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world.” Yet the spirit of our Lord’s teaching, as regards His revelation of this fact,—the explanation of “the mystery which was hid for ages,”—had been caught by His enemies, the Chief Priests and Pharisees, and was the chief cause why they wished to put Him to death. Alas! that human enmity should be more clear-sighted than human affection.

However, since the disciples really loved their Lord, He availed Himself of their *love to give them immediate comfort.* He

announced to them that He would send them "another Comforter." This "*Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost,*" would strengthen them to see clearly, what they might already have seen to a greater degree than they had done. Meanwhile, let them adhere to their love. Let them act up to the light they had admitted into their minds. Instead of chiding them for the past,—(beyond the gentle rebuke to Philip, which was not wanting in endearment,)—He would soon give them more light. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments, and I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth ; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him." What an announcement was this. "Another Comforter !" One like Himself ! They knew what a Comforter He had been to them ; and now He engages to send them another—only not arrayed in flesh. He speaks of the Holy Spirit as a *Person*—as much a *Person* as He

was—as the completer of His work, by dwelling in them, and exercising divine power over their hearts. Could Jesus have announced any thing more consolatory to the disciples—though necessarily strange to their ears? And still more, what a precious announcement it is to us—as He meant it to be! The Comforter is to abide with His true disciples “for ever.” The individuals may die, but Christ’s Mystical Body, the true Church, remains; and the “Spirit of Truth” is never to leave it. What a comfort in days, such as periodically occur in the Visible Church, when all is dark and lowering, and the weak heart is apt to tremble lest “the gates of Hell should prevail” against the Invisible Church! Here is an infallible assurance that this shall not be. “God is a Spirit,” and there will never be wanting those who will “worship Him in spirit and in truth.” Spirituality is the characteristic excellence of the dispensation of the Spirit. It is the peculiar mark of the children of God. To be *without it*, is to abide in the outer courts of

the temple of the Jews. The Jews, indeed, were not all ignorant or destitute of the Spirit of God. Their own book told them, that "the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters," at the Creation, and brought light out of darkness, order out of confusion. "The Spirit of God strove with men," before the Flood. And after the Flood, He strove with them—especially with the chosen people. David prays: "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me!" In His extraordinary gifts, the Spirit rested on Moses and the seventy elders who judged the Israelites in the wilderness. He also spoke by the prophets. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Such was His operation, ordinary and extraordinary, under the Old Dispensation. But now, under the New, He was to descend in unexampled effusion and might. The disciples of Christ needed special and constant help, for they were to go forth to evangelize the world. The same need is still felt. The world is not yet evange-

philosophy, and vain deceit. The ordinary gifts of the Spirit, in neither have, nor need, perhaps. The imperishable record of miracle ought to produce the same effect on the performance did on those who and recorded them. Our Lord, at resurrection, the greatest of miracle. Thomas : " Because thou hast seen, and hast believed ; blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed ! the eye of faith, if God gives it, is as strong as that of sense. And as the power of tongues, effectual as it was to spread the Gospel in all nations, its place is now taken by the art of

the ordinary, but greater and better, gifts of inward holiness, zeal, and love. If we ask in Christ's name, we shall have these. We shall have the Comforter Himself, to make us faithful witnesses for Christ in the world. Nay, we shall have the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity to dwell in us. "If a man love Me," said Jesus, "he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and *We* will come unto him, and make Our abode with Him." Taking this promise in connection with that of the Comforter's dwelling in us, the inconceivable honour and happiness of having the Three Divine Persons abiding with us is here promised us by Christ Himself. Well might He describe the consequence to be that of peace: "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you; Not as the world giveth, give I unto you." But, lest all that He had said should fail to fill the disciples with perfect peace at that moment, our Lord concluded the part of His discourse which we have been considering, by an appeal to their affection for Him. He enlists that

for my Father is greater than I." This was a very tender appeal, and likely to be felt by them. They did love Him, and they knew what a life of suffering He had led, and that there was no prospect of His enemies being weary of persecuting Him. Could they wish Him to remain on earth? They had now learnt, that their dream of an earthly kingdom was at an end. He was going to His Father, who was "greater than He" at present,—because He had "taken upon Him the form of a servant" for a time, "and was found in fashion as a man," and in that form, was about to "humble Himself unto death, even the death of the cross." But He would soon

appeal to their feelings towards Him, kindly meant to turn their thoughts from their own bereavement, and fix them on His relief from a life which "the contradiction of sinners" had rendered a continued martyrdom, Jesus finished the supper—His last meal before His Crucifixion. "Arise," He said, "Let us go hence."

An analysis of the 14th chapter of St. John's Gospel, has afforded scope to these reflections—and might have suggested more. We can but briefly glance at the remainder of the discourse, delivered on the road to Gethsemane.

In the 15th chapter, He gave His disciples the beautiful and practical illustration of the union between Himself and His followers, which consists in representing Him as the vine, and them as the branches. He spoke also of their union with each other: "I command you, that ye love one another." Mutual love, then, is not left optional; it is one of "Christ's commandments"—of which he said: "If ye love Me, keep My *commandments*." When He laid this

charge on the disciples, He knew what need they would have of mutual help and sympathy, as fellow-soldiers, and fellow-sufferers in the world. He forewarned them what to expect, because like Him they were "not of the world." "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me, before it hated you." Again He speaks of the Comforter. He mentions Him now in connection with His own honour: "He shall testify," He says, "of Me; and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning."

In the sixteenth chapter, our Lord pursues the subject of their persecution, and explains more particularly *how* the Spirit would testify of Him, and help them to testify. He does not disguise from them the extent of the persecution: "The time will come, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth God service." "Nevertheless," He adds, "I tell you the truth, It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not *come to you*, but if I go away, I will send

im unto you." Stranger words than these: "It is expedient for you that I go away," the disciples had never heard; yet they were strictly true words. So long as Jesus remained with His disciples, they could desire no other Comforter. They could therefore want that enlightening, which it is the special office of the Holy Spirit to communicate. But if Jesus were removed, they would then willingly receive another Comforter, of whom Jesus spoke in such glowing terms. Then they would learn the truths necessary for them as witnesses, and their hearts would be moved to value them, and eagerly disseminate them. They could also receive the extraordinary gifts, through which their character as heaven-sent missionaries would be authenticated. Thus they would, by the Spirit, be fitted for the mightiest task ever committed to mortals—the execution of which angels might envy them—that of spreading through the world the news that a Redeemer was come, and that God was a reconciled Father. *By their preaching and writing, the world*

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selves, personally and individ
is the greatest blessing a ma
It separates him from thing
sports him into a bright and
—purifies his heart—and m
gether “a new creature.”
Jesus was with the discip
they were hindered from e
because He was seen. Th
His company—they repose

His bodily presence must be taken away, that they might grow acquainted with His spiritual one. So long as men rely too much on helps from the senses, they are careless of the spiritual things to which the helps are but stepping-stones. It was not to be expected in the nature of the case, that the disciples would set any bounds to their reliance on their Lord and Master while visible—they were, therefore, peculiarly in danger of falling into that fatal error. Thus Jesus best shewed His love to them by retiring from their senses. They were to follow Him still,—but it was to be in heart, not in the body. They were to be with Him still—but it was to be by “sitting with Him in heavenly places.” They were to know Him far better than they had hitherto done. They were to be weaned from narrow, exclusive, Jewish notions and prejudices. In short, they were to comprehend “God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” Our Lord’s words were to be *verified*, but not in the way they expected.

"I go away and come again unto you. They thought that He would come again in the body to be with them during the whole lives. They found afterwards, that His coming again was of a better kind, and that they lost Him in the flesh to recover Him in the spirit.

In the 17th chapter, Christ turns from speaking to the disciples, concerning the work here below in the establishment of His Church, to speak to His Father, concerning His own glory and theirs in the kingdom above. The whole chapter is *Prayer*—especially solemn, majestic, tender. He interceded for His poor followers. What would have become of them without Him?

gave Himself a ransom for all." To Him we may look up with confidence. In His name we are to pray to the Father. He will present our prayers, sprinkled with His own blood. He will bind us to Himself, and to one another. He will give us the comfort of the Holy Ghost—that comfort which at once supports us and sanctifies us. May we often read His parting prayer, that we may look, as it were, into His bosom, and see how unceasingly He cares for us! May the prospect of being with Him enable us to tread the world under our feet! If we are alarmed at the thought of our unworthiness, let the recollection of His having offered such a prayer for His disciples, just before their desertion of Him, allay our apprehensions. He saw no worthiness in men, when He came down from heaven to redeem them from destruction. "He came to seek and save that which was lost." He came to bring back the wanderers to their Father's house. He effected this at infinite cost to Himself. Will He cast away the reward of His sufferings?

Will He gather no more? Will He despise us? Having "called us," will He not, if we, through grace, obey the call, also "justify us;" and if He justifies us, will He not also "sanctify us;" and if He sanctifies us, will He not also "glorify us"? What sure *comfort*, what perfect *peace*, have we in Christ! The Father will give us all things for His sake. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" The joys and sorrows of earth, will "work together for our good." The "time is short"—and soon, "if we hold the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end," the closing words of our Lord's Prayer will be realized to us:—"Father, I will that they whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me, that they may behold My glory!"

Amen, Lord Jesus, may we be Thine! May we live to Thee and by Thee here, and with Thee hereafter!

As if to present the strongest contrast *between Divine affection and human, St.*

John has faithfully related, that at the close of the Discourse, and before the Prayer, the disciples unanimously (Judas having before gone away) declared their full belief of all that Jesus had spoken: “Now we believe that Thou knowest all things, and camest forth from God.” How painful the answer!—painful to them, painful to us, but most of all painful to Him who felt it necessary to shew them the weakness of their hearts:—“Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone!” Such would be their failing love—but His would not fail. To shew them this, He uttered not a word of reproach, but proceeded at once to pray for them. What love was ever like His love?

"O MY FATHER, IF THIS CUP MAY NOT PASS AWAY FROM
ME, EXCEPT I DRINK IT, THY WILL BE DONE."—Matt. xx.

CHAPTER III.

THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE— THE BETRAYAL—THE DESERTION.

It is become deep night. Probably a moon-light night—for the Feast of the Passover was always held by the Jews at full moon.* But it is equally probable that driving clouds obscured the sky,—for the officers, who came soon afterwards to take Jesus, were provided, we are told, “with lanterns and torches.” The face of the heavens, we may suppose, shewed a struggle between light and darkness—a faint reflection of that

* A modern infidel flippantly suggested, that the darkness which came over the land at the Crucifixion might be a solar eclipse. He forgot, or was not aware, that the Jews kept the Passover at full moon, when a *lunar* eclipse was alone possible.

mysterious and awful struggle which went on below—where Jesus had to wage His last conflict with Satan—where Mercy was to rejoice against Judgment, but not till the merciful had suffered the penalty—where Divine Love and Pity flashed forth in contrast with the deep gloom of human sin and weakness.

Judas, we may infer from the inspired account of what previously took place, had left the supper table, before the commencement of our Lord's Discourse. He had, perhaps, been irritated by the private exposure of him, which Jesus made to St. John and St. Peter—supposing him to have heard what Jesus said, that the sop would point out the traitor. For we are told, that "when he had received the sop, Satan entered into him." Satan we know, had "entered into Judas" two days before, and had prompted him to that infamous bargain with the Rulers, by which he sold his Master at the price of a slain slave, (Exod. xxi., 32). The receipt of the sop seems now to have *given the enemy of souls an advantage to*

urge his wretched victim to the immediate execution of his design. The sop in itself carried no offensive meaning, but if Judas overheard our Lord's words, (and what ear so quick as that of conscious guilt ?) resentment would arise in him, and be a goad to his habitual covetousness. Yet—allowing the probability of this—how strange it appears, that when Judas was made aware that his heart lay so bare and open to his Master's divine inspection, he should have been bold enough to persevere in his horrible intentions ! But wickedness is in all cases a miracle of boldness. It is sheer “fighting against God.” Sin would be an incredible thing, were it not of all things the most common. Judas, indeed, must, a thousand times before, have been struck with the fact, that our Lord could read the hearts of men ; so that this was not the first occasion when he hardened himself against reason as well as religion. The difference between his ordinary covetousness, and his treason, into which that covetousness ripened, was but *one of degree*. The process of hardening

had hitherto been gradual,—suddenly it attained its completion. Judas went out, to defy God and his own conscience to the uttermost. We shall soon see how God woke up the conscience, so long slighted and scorned, to assert its authority, and take vengeance on the mad and miserable defier. But we will not anticipate the order of the narration by saying more of Judas for the present.

Jesus then—having made such ample use of the Passover Feast—having afforded His disciples the beautiful lesson on humility conveyed by washing their feet—having instituted the Christian Memorial Feast, which reminds us how he became the true Passover for the whole world—having delivered the heart-affecting discourse which revealed so many of the deepest truths, not only concerning His humanity and sympathy with us, but also concerning His Eternal Sonship—and having concluded all by the sublime prayer in which He poured out His desire that His followers might share the glory He was about to resume—*had now reached the Garden of Gethse-*

which was on the road to the Mount of Olives. At the entrance to this garden—(a borrowed one, no doubt, like the room at Jerusalem)—He bade the disciples remain outside, with the exception of Peter, James, and John—the three favoured ones, who had witnessed the scene of His Transfiguration. These three He took with Him into the garden, that they might see a very different scene—a scene of fear and dismay on His part—a scene of anguish, both of body and soul—which must have astonished and afflicted them beyond measure, and which yet, could they have then penetrated its causes, would have shewn them their Divine Master in a far more glorious point of view—suffering as He was a preparatory foretaste of what He was soon to suffer on the Cross—than when Moses and Elias did homage to Him on the Mount, where “His face shone as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light.” The view of the Divine Mercy, overcoming the difficulty presented by the conflicting claim of Divine *Justice*, is grander than the grandest exhi-

ready in shewing mercy and my mind easily unites the ideas of might ;—but how a just and pure be merciful to a sinner, and ever him into favour as a son, can only be received by Faith. There are reasons which repudiate the doctrine of redemption through the voluntary vicarious sacrifice of the Son of God. They do not reverently, what does God tell us he has done? but, what should we have done if we had been in God's place, and had to deal with a rebellious race? Their weakness after the ability of their nature was weakened as it is by the Fall. They are led to the lispings of their own consciences.

most shining, most comforting, most purifying and restoring, exhibition of the Deity—far exceeding what he could have imagined possible, before it was revealed, and yet coming home at once, when revealed, both to his reason and his feelings, as worthy of a God of infinite love, and infinite holiness. In our suffering Saviour, even the Divine grandeur reaches a climax. Well might the Angelic Host usher Him into the world with the heavenly hymn: “Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill towards men !”

It is only by taking this deep and revealed view, that we can at all comprehend the scene which ensued in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Jesus, having entered it with His three disciples, “began,” it is said, “to be sore amazed, and very heavy.” “My soul,” He cried, “is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death.” Never had His human soul so suffered before. It was something new, even to Him—the “Man of Sorrows.” It *amazed Him*. “Tarry ye here,” He said

to the disciples, "while I go and pray yonder." He "went forward, about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and fell on His face," and broke out into that prayer which we can never read without astonishment: "Abba, Father! all things are possible unto Thee; take this cup from me!" Here it is plain, He spoke under the sole feeling of His humanity. By His own incomprehensible power, He was able to place His divinity, as it were, in abeyance. He was subject to all our weaknesses; He felt them the more because He was not subject to our sinful propensities; His horror of sin gave His human soul exquisite pain. What, then, must that pain have been, when the wrath of God against sin, His own Father's wrath, was descending upon Him—on His pure, but weak, human nature? How must He have shrunk from what in itself is intolerable, but to Him must have been most intolerable! Yet He came to bear that wrath for us, to deliver us from it. Either He or we must bear *it*. There was and is no other alterna-

tive. He had engaged to save us; all He could do, therefore, was to submit—to submit to our penalty—to submit to pangs which He knew to be inexpressible, especially with His tender and affectionate susceptibilities,—sensible that the Father loved Him from all eternity even as He loved the Father, and yet about to be treated as an outcast, as a sinner, and not a son!—He, the sinless, about to be made a curse and a sin-offering for us! What but the anticipation of these horrors could have drawn from Him such a prayer as that which He addressed to His Father? What else could have put Him into the *agony* which ensued? What else could have caused the sweat to fall from His forehead,—“as it were great drops of blood,”—so thick and in such a dark stream—“down to the ground?”

Could it have been the mere fear of death? Impossible! To Him death, simply as the dissolution of soul and body, would have been most welcome. *Many a man of ordinary stamp sighs for*

that release from earthly troubles. Many a martyr for the truth can foresee with calmness, and bear with equanimity, sometimes even with joy, the slowest and most painful death that his persecutors can inflict. Nay, the poor untutored Indian, unsupported by any knowledge of religion, can smile on his tormentors at the stake, and urge them to put his endurance more fully to the proof. Can this superiority to the dread of death be shewn by men like ourselves, and shall we suppose that our Lord was incapable of shewing it? He, whose troubles were the heaviest and most uninterrupted ever encountered in the flesh—whose whole life was a martyrdom, so that a speedy termination to it must have been an object of intense desire—could He be afraid in an unexampled degree of the mere act of dying? Let us be sure, that there was more that Jesus had to fear in death, than the mere act of dying. There was a taste of the second death awaiting Him on the cross. He “tasted death for every man,” *says the Apostle*—evidently meaning the

second death.* This is that from which He saves us, by having "tasted it for us." He has not exempted us from the necessity of passing through the first death; but He has delivered us from the jaws of the second death, by having suffered its devouring rage for a time in His soul, when that awful cry, which must have spread consternation in heaven, broke from His mouth on the cross: "My God, My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?" In the prospect of this approaching suffering, doubtless, consisted His agony in the garden. In the withdrawal of the light of God's countenance, consisted what one of our old writers calls, His "unknown pangs:" "By Thine unknown pangs," says Bishop Andrewes, in his litany, "Good Lord deliver us." This was the unspeakably bitter ingredient in the cup which He came into the world to drink, and which the Father was about to put to His lips. It was not death "He feared"—it was

* See Bishop Horsley's Sermons. Sermon iv., on *Matt. xvi. 28.*

have to be borne by every man who void the death of Christ." Either sinner, or on his substitute, it may be said, God has told us this; "and let it be true, but every man a liar!" Unless we impute to us His righteousness, even as we stand on the cross, we "shall not see but the wrath of God abideth on us."

Unless we thus discern what caused our Lord's agony, and His astonishing prayer, we shall do Him the greatest injustice. We shall place His courage on a lower level than that of a large number of human sufferers. We shall make His crucifixion nothing more than an act of heroism, and not a sacrifice.

anger?" Nothing but a most imperfect estimate of the true nature of sin, can lead to such a defective view of Christ's "sore amazement" in the garden. Let us pray to be preserved from the calamity and guilt of taking this view—so opposed to Scripture—so disparaging to our Lord—and so suicidal as regards our own souls!

How shall we be sufficiently thankful, if we are spared from ever knowing by experience the *peculiar pain* endured by Christ in making that sacrifice of Himself which stands alone in the universe—that "full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world," which alone can save us from it?

When Jesus had poured forth His agony and His prayer,—concluding it with the entire resignation of His human soul into the hands of His Father: "Nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done!"—He was comforted. "He was heard in that He feared." His "strong crying and tears" brought an angel from His Father, to "*strengthen Him*"—to assure Him of the

“What? could ye not watch with Me
hour?”* and partly with a valuable
monition, intended for all time: “Watch
and pray, lest ye enter into temptation:
the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh
is weak.” Twice more did He leave
that He might suffer the same agony
conquer for Himself again and against
powerful and subtle foe, who tempted
to give up the design for which He
entered into the flesh, and abandon
our misery. And twice more on He
turn to His disciples, He found them asleep.
Can we wonder that a few minutes
wards,—when He most needed their faith
and affectionate adherence to cheer

what unwearied gentleness and kindness does He address them: "Watch and pray."*

Judas, "with a band from the Chief Priests and Pharisees," now broke into the garden. The disciples outside seem to have offered no opposition. The traitor, instead of keeping in the back-ground, advanced to Jesus—addressed Him, "Hail, Master!"—"and kissed Him!" That hour was the hour of our Lord's enemies, "and the power of darkness." Jesus was to wring out the very dregs of the cup of shame and sorrow, which He had consented to drink. He meekly submitted to this wanton insult—only intimating His sense of it by the dignified comment: "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?"—a question which alas! may be asked of many a smiling follower of our Lord in every generation. Perhaps it was the unhappy traitor's recollection of this mildness on the part of his Master—aggravating his

* Well might St. Paul use that beautiful adjuration: "I beseech you, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ."—(1st Cor. x. i.)

own wickedness, injustice, and ingratitude, by the contrast—which raised in him a few hours afterwards such a tempest of remorse, that “he went and hanged himself.” Satan would not be slow to call up the recollection for that purpose—the cruel tyrant, who first tempts, and then accuses, and finally drives his miserable slaves to despair !

The dark tragedy was now drawing to a close. But Jesus did not forbear to mingle with the darkness a few more bright gleams of His own goodness and gentleness, and of the divine power which He possessed, and might have put forth to the utmost, had it been His will. He would shew that His surrender was wholly voluntary.

In the first instance, He allowed such a sense of His majesty to strike the officers, that “they went backward, and fell to the ground,” when He told them: “I am He!”—the man whom they sought ! But He withdrew the awe under which they laboured, and permitted them to arise, and *take Him*. Before He did this, however,

He secured the safety of His followers: "I am He! if therefore ye seek Me, let these go their way." It is beautifully added by the Evangelist, who himself was one of them: "That the saying might be fulfilled, which He spake, Of them whom Thou hast given Me, have I lost none!" He also checked Peter's ebullition of zeal, and even worked a miracle to heal the wound which Peter's sword inflicted on one of the High Priest's servants. Yes! He worked a miracle for an enemy—but He would work no miracle for Himself. "He saved others, Himself He could not save," was an after-taunt against Him, which contained a most touching truth. Peter's ill-timed interference showed how little he understood of the state of things. "Thinkest thou," Jesus said to him, "that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels; but how then shall the Scripture" (the record of His counsel and will from everlasting) "be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" *How easily, and by a word, could He have*

overthrown all the monarchies and pow
on earth, and have ascended the throne
a monarchy that should be universal!—
He had a far higher object, which co
only be attained by “humbling Hims
and becoming obedient unto death, ev
the death of the cross.” Having n
made it perfectly plain to all present, th
His surrender was voluntary, and that I
love and pity could not be quenched by t
worst that could happen to Him, He c
livered Himself up to the band wh
followed Judas. “Then the band, and t
captain, and the officers of the Jews, to
Jesus, and bound Him.” Strange th

Him with a kiss;—unless he is at this moment “a new creature in Christ?” Who, at least, can look upon it as impossible, or even improbable, that when Christ’s cause comes to be imperilled in the world, and the multitude is arrayed against it, he will play the cowardly and servile part of joining the opponents of that cause? Our only safety lies in loving it now, and being heartily engaged in forwarding it. If we have “the Mind that was in Christ”—exhibited to us in the Scripture, and imparted to us by the Spirit—then we are in no danger. But if we depend on ourselves, and have only a name to live, while really destitute of the divine life—or if we are ignorant of our holy religion, in the midst of all the light by which we are surrounded—there is no depth into which we may not fall—no treachery, or servility, of which we may not be guilty, when circumstances arise to put us to the proof.

What was the sad issue of the unseasonable sleep in which the disciples within the *garden*, and doubtless their companions also

who were without, had indulged themselves, when they should have been watching and praying? The temptation came, and they were not prepared. As soon as they saw their Master bound, "*they all forsook Him, and fled!*" How truthful and candid is Holy Scripture, which tells us of this disgraceful conduct on the part of the disciples, and tells it us from their own pens. Being written for our instruction, it conceals nothing. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." These simple-hearted but self-trusting men lost their faith for a time, and with it they lost their power of standing. Because they saw Jesus in the hands of His enemies, they supposed His cause was ruined. Because He refused to be an earthly king, and to let His servants fight for Him with a sword of steel, they concluded that He was no king at all, that he had deluded Himself. They "esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted"—as a self-deceiver. They did *not* lose their affection for Him, but they *lost their confidence* in Him. They became

deserters—glad to avail themselves of the forbearance of the officers, which Jesus had made the condition of his own surrender,—afraid to stand by his side, and go with Him, and, if it were needed, to testify before kings and rulers in His behalf—ashamed of Him the moment the battle seemed to turn against Him. “Lord, what is man?” Were these Thy choicest followers? Were these the best men upon earth at that very moment? Is faith so hard a thing to obtain? Let us see clearly, that it is a gift. Let us learn from the revealed history, that it is only to be obtained by humility, self-renunciation, and asking. First, the eye must be firmly fixed on Jesus. The constant reading of Scripture will direct our sight to Him. But this is not enough. We must then pray for “the comfort of the Holy Ghost,” to enable us to fix not merely the eye, but the heart on Him. We must also cherish the faith, which in answer to prayer God gives us by the Word and the Spirit. Our very *falls must teach us to be* “sober and vigi-

...meaning. A Lord's previous
should have been a safeguard to
thou of little faith! wherefore
doubt?" should have come to
brance from the former occasion
was so ready to "walk on the
Jesus, till "he saw the wind boi
began to sink." Let the pre
concerning the value and nee
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lips of Jesus, be of use to us,
failed to benefit Peter.

"*Lord! increase our faith!*"
on us that heavenly gift which
sure protection in the hour of fier
tation. Whilst Thou girdest us
— — — — —

to discover, like the disciples, that “our own strength is but weakness.” And, if we fall like them—though our sin will be greater than theirs, because we have the lesson which their history affords us—yet look down mercifully upon us from the Throne of Thy glory!—Thou that art the Saviour of all penitent sinners—full of endless love and pity! Pray for us as Thou didst for them, “that our faith fail not.” Awaken in us that “godly sorrow, which worketh repentance unto salvation.” “Cast us not away from Thy presence, nor take Thy Holy Spirit from us.” Cause us to feel how joyful a doctrine it is, that we depend not on our own merits to satisfy the Father and gain reconciliation, but on Thine. May we cling to Thee more closely than ever, after we have experienced that “without Thee we can do nothing.” Though wounded at times and put to shame, may we grow wiser and safer, by growing better acquainted with all the wiles of the enemy, and more skilful *in the use of* “the whole armour of God.”

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May we become bolder also, to “fight the good fight,”—more cheerful, more hopeful,—as our victories, of which Thine be the glory! increase, and as that happy land appears nearer in view, where we shall “rest from our labours.” If the weakness of the disciples on that terrible night, when they trusted to themselves, is a warning, let the record of their subsequent career when they trusted in Thee, be an encouragement. May the Comforter, who caused it to be written, cause it to answer its purpose! May it animate us never to despair—“never to faint”!—but to go on contending and conquering, as they did—confiding in Thee, O Blessed Jesus!—and believing that Thy promise to the least of Thy followers will never fail: “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life!”

‘HE IS BROUGHT AS A LAMB TO THE SLAUGHTER.’—(Is.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HALL OF CAIAPHAS—THE MOCK TRIAL—
PETER'S DENIAL OF OUR LORD.

THIS sad night is fast wearing away towards the dawn. The scene is again changed. Jesus is dragged back, in bonds, to Jerusalem. Where else should the last crime be consummated? "It cannot be"—He cried, with all the bitterness of grief and wounded affection, on a former occasion, but looking forward to this:—"It cannot be, that a Prophet perish out of Jerusalem." On that occasion, He gave vent to His feelings in those most pathetic words: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her

wings; and ye would not!" We cannot doubt, that His feelings were the same now, and still stronger. We cannot, indeed, conceive the pain, arising from compassion, with which Jesus must have entered the city, under the present circumstances. A few days previously, He had entered it as a King. The road was strewn with branches, cut from the palm trees, and with garments spread beneath His feet by adoring multitudes. He was hailed, by those that went before and those that followed, with loud hosannas, as the long-expected Deliverer, the predicted Messiah, who, according to their fond hopes, in spite of their humiliating subjection to the Romans, was to rescue them from every foreign yoke, and instal them at the head of the nations in unexampled power and splendour. "Hosannah! Blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord!" But now He was once more treading the same road, but with what an outward *change of circumstances!*—a sad though a *voluntary prisoner*—manacled and guarded



and says he must not be
of contempt the world. For
and creation is best; long
valued it in the eyes. As
and His life, was the might
of the whole world, many
not? Can we afford
to the human

Can we sufficiently bless Him for His divine goodness? "All was done that the Scriptures might be fulfilled!"

The fickle populace had melted away like snow beneath the beams of the sun. Because He would not restrict His love to the Jews alone, they at once rejected Him. Because He would not be made a king in the sense they wished, they would not make Him a king in the sense He wished. They would not have Him to reign over them in their hearts and lives. They would not slay their sins and iniquities at the foot of His throne. The disappointment of their earthly and selfish expectations, caused an entire revolution in their feelings towards Him. They did not merely fall away from Him—they passed over to the side of His persecutors. The day, of which the dawn was fast approaching, was destined to see them obeying the guidance of the Chief Priests and Pharisees, and changing their cry of "Hosannah!" into *that of* "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" *Alas!* poor human nature! Here was the

y nation on earth that was acquainted
h the true God, and in this nation the
of God finds Himself disowned,—cast
of His own vineyard,—hated, and per-
ted even to death. “What is Man,
t Thou hast such respect unto him?”
y were *we* objects of pity, when the
en angels were left unredeemed? Could
y sin worse than men did? Could they
omit an act more horrible than that
which Jews and Gentiles, kings, priests,
people, were about to be guilty, in
ing the Lord of Glory? We must leave
mystery to be unfolded in the next
ld. Meanwhile, let the thought of it
e to inflame our gratitude to Him, who,
pite of all our unworthiness, “so loved
that He gave Himself for us!” Let us
me “new creatures in Christ Jesus,”
thus vindicate the ways of God to men.
hrough the silent streets of Jerusalem,
Blessed Lord, an uncomplaining
oner, is hurried, first to the house of
aged High Priest Annas, and then to a
urnal meeting of the Sanhedrim in the

hall of Caiaphas, who was son-in-law to Annas, and was usually spoken of as High Priest, because he acted as such that year. Here—in this Hall, or Court of Justice so called—let us contemplate Jesus, “the Judge of all the earth,” standing meekly before men as His judges—judges the most unjust that ever existed, even among men!

These unjust judges—to add to the horror of the scene—were the descendants of His faithful and honoured servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They were the highest in rank and dignity, civil and religious, of His own favoured people the Jews. No human court could be more august and venerable, in all its official qualifications. The Sanhedrim was the Great Council of the Jewish nation. It had its origin in the appointment of the Seventy Elders in the Wilderness to assist Moses in judging the people, when the Spirit “rested on” the men whom he was *guided to choose*. It included Priests and *Rulers, Scribes, and Doctors of the Law.*

ere was a full meeting of it that night.
 were assembled to condemn our Lord
 one were wanting. We are particularly
 l, that the officers "led Jesus to the
 gh Priest" (meaning Caiaphas), "and
 h him were assembled *all* the Chief
 ests, and the Elders, and the Scribes."
 It might have been supposed beforehand,
 at such a council as the one which was
 is assembled in Jerusalem, would not be
 owed by God to come to a wrong decision
 especially on a point of such importance
 that of the claim of Jesus to the Mes-
 hship. If ever official infallibility might
 expected, it was then. The Jewish
 urch was of divine appointment, and the
 nhedrim was its lawful representative.
 ie question was the greatest that ever
 ncerned that Church and nation. Yet
 od was not with the Council. They were
 ot restrained by any divine power from
 ming to the most iniquitous decision.
 ideed, they met with their minds made
 p. They went through the farce of
 aring a few witnesses, all on one side,

none on the other.* But it was a mere farce—the trial was a mock trial—the sentence was pre-arranged, the condemnation certain. In short, no evidence on the side of the prisoner could have affected the final result, for they were determined to disregard His innocence, were it as clear as the noon-day. Expediency—that specious substitute for what is right and just—demanded His death. Caiaphas had overruled all scruples as to going to such an extreme—or rather, perhaps, as to running such a risk, when the temper of the people was doubtful—by the advice he had given at a meeting held shortly before. “It is ex-

* It is curious to observe, that though they called witnesses to prove that Jesus had spoken of destroying the Temple, and pretended to understand it of the visible Temple, yet in their hearts they knew well enough His real meaning. For when the Crucifixion was over, they came to Pilate and told him: “Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while He was yet alive, After three days, I will rise again.” This evidently alludes to John ii. 19., which *they had learnt* to construe better than the disciples *had done*—another instance, how much sharper and *more keen-eyed* is human malice than human love.

pedient for us, that one man " (however good and innocent) "should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." The nation, in his view, was disturbed and endangered by the endeavour of Jesus to reform it. No danger, he thought, could be equal to that of permitting Christ to live on. Caiaphas was a Sadducee, and gave this politic advice as a man of the world—cold, heartless, and selfish—not believing in a world beyond the grave, where injustice will be reckoned with. He was, however, we are expressly told, giving utterance to an unconscious prophecy, as High Priest—a prophecy which gave due honour to the Saviour, who was about to die, not for that nation alone, but for "all the children of God scattered abroad" on the face of the earth. Deeper feelings, however, than those which swayed the mind of Caiaphas, filled the breasts of that portion of the Council which consisted of the Pharisees. Self-righteousness, pride, and formalism, had made these men bitter *personal enemies* of our Lord. Their national

exclusiveness—that deceitful form of selfishness—was in arms against Him. They felt instinctively that He aimed at opening to the Gentiles the door of access to God. They saw the true bearing of many acts and words of His to that effect. Let us call to mind a few instances. His assuming power to cleanse the temple from those foul birds of prey, the greedy dealers in cattle and money-changers, who had defiled “His Father’s House,” saying at the same time, “Is it not written, My House shall be called a House of Prayer for all nations?” (marginal reading);—His calling Himself “Lord also of the Sabbath Day,” exercising authority to set the observance free from such ritual restrictions as were suited to the Jews alone, and proclaiming aloud: “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath,” restoring and explaining its spirit by the use He made of it;—His mode of speaking of the impending destruction of the temple and of *Jerusalem*;—His parable of the good *Samaritan*;—His declaration that what the

woman who anointed His body had done, should be made known by "the Gospel which would be preached throughout the whole world;"—these, and the like, were plain intimations that the partition-wall would undoubtedly be thrown down between Jew and Gentile, if what Jesus called "the Kingdom of Heaven" were established. Therefore, the Chief Priests and Pharisees opposed that establishment to the utmost, because all that was dear to their carnal hearts was at stake. The principle of caste, in fact, was at issue between the Redeemer of mankind and themselves. Moreover, the great question, Who were to be the interpreters of Scripture? was vitally concerned in this fierce struggle. Were men to be allowed, as rational beings, to judge of the sense of the words which God addressed to them, by the mouth of men like themselves, who spoke their language and knew their feelings, but were under divine inspiration? Our Lord said they were. He bade His hearers "*search the Scriptures.*" He appealed to

the Prophets, as witnesses in His favour against His opponents. He laid claim to Moses himself as leaving them without excuse: "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me." This was denying their peculiar right of interpretation, by accusing them of unfairness and error. What more could be needed to shew, how our Lord regarded the question? Had He acknowledged any infallible power in those who represented the Jewish Church to interpret the Scriptures, *we* must have given up hope in Christ!—for that Church considered and pronounced Him to be an enemy to Moses, and a false pretender to the character of the predicted Messiah. No! the Chief Priests and Rulers, who were met in solemn conclave on this occasion, mistook their duty and function. They should have spoken according to the Written Word,—but they spoke in plain opposition to it. St. Peter describes the awful mistake they made:—"They that dwell at Jerusalem and their Rulers,—because they knew Him not, nor

yet the voices of the Prophets, which are read every Sabbath-day,—they have fulfilled them in condemning Him.” And alas! they condemned their own souls.

Behold, then, the prophecy of Isaiah fulfilled: “He was despised and rejected of men!”—“He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth.” But who can conceive the force of the temptation which Satan presented to Him, to put forth His might in self-defence? One word would have scattered all His persecutors. One act of His divine will would have saved Himself. The Tempter, we cannot doubt, made the most of his last opportunity, to press Him to say or do something which would have this effect. “The hour of the power of darkness” was not yet ended. The Enemy would aggravate—did they admit of aggravation—the sorrows and insults inflicted by wretched *men on One* who had come to rescue them

the Prophets, as witnesses against His opponents. He Moses himself as leaving excuse: "Had ye believed Me, for he wrote have believed Me, for he wrote This was denying their peculiar right interpretation, by accusing them of in- ness and error. What more could needed to shew, how our Lord regarded a question? Had He acknowledged a fallible power in those who represented Jewish Church to interpret the Scri- we must have given up hope in Ch- that Church considered and pro- an enemy to Moses, an- character of the P.

from misery. His mode of assault would be different from that which he adopted a little more than three short years before in the wilderness of Judea. There, he presented alluring pictures, and made pleasant promises of earthly joy and greatness. Here, he brought terrific visions of horrors awaiting our Lord's condemnation, if he quietly submitted to it. Then, he was the wily Serpent. Now, he was the roaring Lion. He had succeeded, more or less, with all but Jesus. He had thrust Judas into the pit of destruction. He had compelled Peter to the brink of it. He had worked on the fears of the other discip-

Whatever were His inward emotions, He betrayed none outwardly. He deigned not to protest against the injustice with which He was treated. Far from loudly asserting His innocence, He answered not a word to the charges laid against Him by the false witnesses. Before the High Priest, Annas, He had, indeed, spoken, and rebuked the taunting inquisitiveness displayed by that hoary unbeliever, who had desired to see Him through mere curiosity, and when he saw Him, only derided Him. But before Caiaphas and the assembled Sanhedrim, He maintained an inflexible silence; till Caiaphas, with consummate art, put a question, which the consideration of His Father's honour, and His own truth, and our comfort of faith, made it necessary for Him, as the crafty High Priest foresaw, not to leave unanswered: "I adjure Thee, by the living God, that Thou tell us, whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God?" So solemn an adjuration drew forth the affirmation, that He was! "*Thou hast said!*—Nevertheless"—(whatever My

present appearance may be)—“hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven.” This was exactly the confession which Caiaphas looked for. He lost not a moment in making use of it. “Then the High Priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy, what further need have we of witnesses? behold, ye have heard His blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death.” To death, then, they condemned Him; and would have stoned Him immediately, since stoning was the Jewish mode of punishing for blasphemy, had they not been restrained by God. Twice before had the Pharisees and Priests and their followers “taken up stones to stone Him” for the same blasphemy in “making Himself the Son of God”—why did they not do the same on this occasion? They told Pilate, when he presently bade them “take Him and kill Him,” that the power *of life and death* was not in their hands *under the Roman government*; but as he

would not have resented their exercising that power, why should they have declined to use it? The explanation no doubt is, that what Jesus had predicted, must be fulfilled! God works on minds and hearts, when men think that they are following only their own inclinations. Christ must needs be *crucified*, as He had said. His innocence must be established before the world. Pilate said: "I find no fault in Him," and these words must go down to all generations. Yet Christ must suffer, innocent as he was pronounced by the impartial Roman. Romans must join Jews in inflicting on Him injustice and death. The whole world, thus represented, must combine to reject the Saviour, and "become guilty before God." Gentile must never be able to say to Jew—"thou alone didst it, I had no part in it." All must be on a par—equally sinful—equally indebted to free Mercy for pardon, through the blood of the Lamb. The public trial also before Pilate served to bring forth more conspicuously the truth of our Lord's Divinity. No

proof of that cardinal doctrine from Scripture seems so strong, as the one which is derived from our Lord's assuming the title of "The Son of God"—in such a sense as to provoke the accusation on several separate occasions during His ministry, and at last before the Roman governor, that "He made Himself equal with God," by calling God His Father and Himself God's Son in the plain and full meaning of the words not in the figurative sense in which they are often used. This constituted His alleged blasphemy. Did He ever deny that He used the words in the peculiar sense ascribed to Him? Never once! Did He shrink, as a good man who was mere a man must have done, from the bare supposition that He arrogated to Himself equality with God? No! rather than tract or explain His words, He allowed Jews to attempt to stone Him; and miraculously passed through the midst of unhurt—which amounted to an appeal to Heaven, that He spoke nothing *blasphemous*. What conclusion c

drawn from this conduct, repeatedly pursued, and persevered in to the last, both before Caiaphas and before Pontius Pilate, but that our Lord deliberately and solemnly intended us to receive the impression, laid to His charge as a crime, but to be welcomed by us as a glorious revelation, that *He is God?* To take any other view, is so injurious to His moral character, as to be too painful to be entertained for a moment.

After His condemnation by the Sanhedrim, He was given up to the rudest insults. "Then began they to spit upon Him, and to buffet Him." But He had triumphed. He had submitted to be condemned. And He triumphed still. "When He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously." While He maintained His divinity as "the Son of God," He bowed as "the Son of Man" to those "stripes by which we are healed." Such was the real Victory over evil men and evil spirits, obtained by our *blessed Lord* in the hall of the High Priest.

in Heaven with the highest Seraph
Angels and Archangels.

One act more on the part of the
Sufferer, in perfect consistency with all
acts throughout this most memorable
nights, we must notice, before we conclude.
It heightens to the last degree our idea of
His forgetfulness of Self in the midst of
all His sufferings. It is His "look
upon Peter." Surrounded as He was by
men thirsting for His blood, and clamoring
for judgment against Him, He thought of
His poor disciple, who was at that time
committing the sin, of which He had
told him. Peter, it appears, in company
with John, had followed Him at a dis-

so as to be able to see Jesus. Here he fell, in such a terrible manner as can only be accounted for by recollecting, what should never be lost sight of throughout the transactions of this night, that Satan was busy putting forth his strength to the uttermost. Our Lord had warned Peter of this, but he trusted in his own strength to resist the Devil. Accordingly, he trembled before a little maid, when she suddenly addressed him as a follower of Jesus. He denied that he had ever been so. He did it again—and yet again. He did it with oaths. “He began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the Man.” The cock crew, and about the space of an hour elapsed, between the second and the third denial; yet he had not returned to his senses. But when he had denied his Master the third time, and the cock crew once more, he remembered the words which Jesus had spoken to him. His “sin found him out”—and who can say that he might not have been so overwhelmed with shame, *as to despair, like Judas, and perish?*

Satan, doubtless, suggested, that his sin was unpardonable. But Jesus counteracted the design of the Tempter and Accuser, by a single kind and forgiving look. "The Lord turned, and looked on Peter! That look restored his confidence in Jesus; it saved his soul; but it added to his remorse and self-indignation. No words could describe his feelings. When a person has sunk into deep waters, and become insensible, but being brought out has been restored to animation by God's blessing on the means used, the first rush of the returning life through the veins, has been described by those who have felt it, as inexpressibly dreadful. This may feebly illustrate Peter's spiritual sensations. The inimitable simplicity of the Gospel account leaves us to imagine what cannot be told — "He went out, and wept bitterly."

That "bitter weeping" must have been a never-forgotten fact to Peter. God forgave him his sin for His dear Son's sake. Of that he was fully sensible. The Psalmist's prayer: "Thou tellest my wandering

into Thy bottle, are they not
Book?" was graciously answered
bottle. But could he ever forgive

We may conceive that we see
bleeding, when he penned that
injunction so many years after-

"Be sober, be vigilant, because
adversary the Devil, as a roaring
walketh about, seeking whom he may

The more, however, he must
apt afresh at every recollection of

the more warmly must he have
Jesus. Doubtless, he could say with

even than before: "Lord, Thou
all things, Thou knowest I love

shall not we love Jesus, when we
of all His pity and forbearance to-

us? Have fearful recollec-
of sins an which He has

ven, but whi ve us? Shall
ve be "cloth ility"? Shall

ve be filled de? Having
"much for not we "love

"p Me e His work of

He send to us the Comforter,
His perfect love! With the love of Christ,
what is there that is "just, and pure,
lovely, and of good report," which will
grow up and shew itself in us? We
shall have "His mind." We shall be "like
Him." If like Him, we shall love all
men—even sinners. We shall "do good,
not reckoning for nothing again." Our desire
shall be to please Him, and glorify Him,
and bring all men to know Him and be
saved. With this burning zeal in us, we
shall think nothing of labour and self-
sacrifices. Our whole life—as Peter's after-
wards was—will be an offering of love and
praise laid upon His altar.

At the bleeding Lamb

persecutors. In a few hours, He will stand before Herod and Pontius Pilate, that the cruel mockery of a judicial trial may be again endured. In a few hours more, He will hang upon the cross! His soul is armed to "do His Father's will, and to finish His work." He has gone through His terrible contest with Satan, who was let loose to try Him in the flesh to the uttermost. He has borne all the griefs which men—including His own friends—could inflict. Nothing has been able to shake His steadfast purpose of saving us, at whatever cost to Himself—and He knew what that cost would be—of suffering. Surely, if the world has not laid its icy finger on our hearts, we must be deeply affected by all that we have been contemplating of His patience and goodness. How wonderful, indeed, is every thing that we behold on that Night, "much to be remembered!" Jesus in His divine power casting to the ground His assailants in the Garden by the majesty of His countenance!—Jesus in His human meekness veiling

at of the rabble in
 upon and buffet" Him! The con-
 between His disciples and Himself is
 ess striking—highly as they are to be
 ded. How is He exalted!—how are
 debased!—yet the picture is drawn
 themselves. What heavenly wisdom,
 rthy of the Saviour of the world, shines
 th in His Discourse! What narrow pre-
 dice and ignorance appear on the face of
 e questions they put!—yet from one of
 eir number proceeds the account of the
 scourse and the questions. Could he
 ave written the discourse, if he had not
 eard it? Could any uninspired man have
 242 The truth of Christianity, as
 the doctrine of the

they so little deserved His love! they, on their part, "forsaking Him" at the first approach of danger, though He so richly deserved their affection! He victoriously contending with the Tempter, when the temptation was infinitely greater than any that mere man could encounter! they failing, as soon as Satan attacked them—never to rise again, had not He helped them! Let us see where our strength lies. In ourselves, we are as weak as they were then—in Him we may be as strong as they were afterwards. Would we be thus strong, we must seek the aid of the Comforter, who came to them afterwards, as Christ promised. To gain His aid in our hearts, we must read the Word, which through His disciples He has put into our hands. If we use, and love to use, the Gift, we shall please and obtain the Giver. He will "reveal Christ in us the hope of glory." He will open our inward eye, by which we shall behold "the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God,"—carrying on the work of our salvation. We shall be Christ's true

ct us. He will make us
conquerors." We shall labour for Him
here, and we shall certainly join Him here-
after—and that, at no long distance of time.
Into Him, who died for us and rose again,
and ever liveth making intercession for us,
be everlasting praise, Amen !





